
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

NORTHWEST VALLEY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is developing a new Regional Transportation Plan for the MAG region. As part of this effort, MAG conducted a series of focus groups to identify and document transportation issues and concerns. The focus groups were held throughout the Valley to capture ideas from geographically and ethnically diverse groups of participants. The findings will assist MAG in identifying regional values, goals, and objectives that will guide the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

The format of the Focus Groups included an opportunity for interactive discussion among participants, as well as a voting exercise that provided insight on priorities. To help structure the process, the discussions were organized into five topics areas. The topics included:

- ✕ Demographic and Social Change;
- ✕ The New Economy;
- ✕ Environmental and Resource Issues;
- ✕ Land Use and Urban Development; and
- ✕ Transportation and Technology.

Participants were encouraged to provide their own issues and concerns that related to each topic, both individually and in a round-table discussion. The responses received were documented in essentially a “verbatim” format so that the message intended by the participant was accurately conveyed.

The results of the **Northwest Valley Focus Group** are attached. This material has been divided into four parts as follows:



Part I. Key Focus Group Issues: In Part I, the key issues identified at the Northwest Valley Focus Group are listed by topic area. These issues are those voted by the participants to be the top two concerns in each topic area. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

Part II. Comprehensive Listing of Participant Issues: In Part II, all the issues identified by the individual participants are listed. These issues have been grouped by topic area.

Part III. Roundtable Discussion Comments: In Part III, the results from a roundtable discussion are listed. These comments were recorded when all the focus group attendees participated in a general discussion of issues prior to voting on the top issues in each topic area.

Part IV. Goals as Presented by Participants: In Part IV, goals were developed by the participants of the focus group attendees in a informal, roundtable discussion, regarding future transportation in the Valley.

If you have any questions or comments on the focus group process or the attached results, please contact Roger Herzog, MAG, at 602-254-6300 or rherzog@mag.maricopa.gov.



NORTHWEST VALLEY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

PART I. KEY FOCUS GROUP ISSUES

The participants of the Northwest Valley Focus Group were given the opportunity to vote on their top two issues in each of the five topic areas. The two issues receiving the most votes are listed under each topic. Due to ties, certain topics may have more than two issues listed.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE PRIMARY ISSUES

- x [Need] public transit services – West Valley, East Valley, Inter-City.
- x High density residential must be joined to employment within the community.
- x Eliminate truck traffic in Downtown and residential areas.

THE NEW ECONOMY PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Establish truck routes.
- x Demand cleaner fuel.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Critically need east-west arterials to Bell Road, and decide within next 3-5 years so all planning can start with these “spine” structures.
- x Accommodate growth while keeping open spaces to benefit quality of life.

LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Preserve land around airports to allow for expansion.
- x Regional participation, cooperation, and support for all infrastructure.
- x Competition among jurisdictions needs to change to cooperation.
- x Light rail is over-rated and over-valued by transportation planners.



- x Light rail, north to south, and east to west.



PART I. KEY FOCUS GROUP ISSUES (CONTINUED)

TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY PRIMARY ISSUES

- x Air quality has to become higher value in transportation planning.
- x Need more corridor studies similar to Bell.
- x Build transportation systems before communities are developed.
- x Emphasis on creation of urban center in northwest versus relying upon Phoenix.

PART II. COMPREHENSIVE LISTING OF PARTICIPANT ISSUES

The following is a comprehensive listing of the issues that individual participants of the Northwest Valley Focus Group identified as their concerns under each topic.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES

- x Aging population needs mass transit.
- x A population growth will help slow congestion.
- x Schools need to be located within master planned communities.
- x Younger residents will demand better air quality.
- x Better-educated job seekers won't commute for two hours one way.
- x Educate in schools to use mass transit.
- x Reduce traffic in school areas.
- x Need to move NAFTA traffic through Maricopa County safely and quickly.
- x Regional – concentrate on increasing bus service, more buses on more routes to accommodate the working persons, thus getting more cars off the road, moving people, decreasing pollution. I come from a large city where bus service was every three minutes during rush hour. People could depend on getting to work and social engagements on time. That is imperative! Particularly in our 100+ degree temperatures in the summer. People cannot chance waiting in the sun, especially the elderly and sickly.



DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- x Local – need more bike and walking areas.
- x Express mass transit between major points.
- x Broad flexible convenient local mass transit connecting with business, medical, and express points.
- x [Realize] senior impacts.
- x [Need] balanced housing.
- x Shift in NW Valley from retirement communities to family-oriented communities.
- x Local – help transportation for aged (hospital).
- x Need to have transportation from city to city for working people other than car.
- x Learn what alternative forms of transportation would be acceptable to senior population to get their “leisure travel” off highways during peak times.
- x Eliminate local traffic congestion.
- x Replace automobile travel with public transit.
- x Seniors need transportation for medical, church etc.
- x More residents in Northwest Valley will gridlock streets – widen all streets.
- x Communities that grow need support.
- x Mass transit – public transportation.
- x Sprawl with no areas for executive homes (e.g. zoning of a minimum of 2 to 4 acres per house) will disqualify an area for consideration when looking for a corporate headquarters site.



THE NEW ECONOMY ISSUES

- x Greater flexibility in workplace hours based on e-connectivity and e-commuting.
- x Build roadways to serve commercial areas without impacting downtown and residential areas.
- x Hi-tech workers will pay for convenience.
- x Businesses will not come to a city without rapid transit. Convention consolidators (firms) sales meeting organizers (firms) will not put Phoenix in their catalogs if there are higher costs (i.e. taxes on hotel rooms etc.), when other states/nations/cities make for more profits to the firms (like Maritz of St. Louis).
- x Sense of strategies of developing jobs near homes.
- x Baby Boomers will have money to spend for rapid transportation. Will need rapid transportation.
- x Localize employment.
- x Education [needs to be realized].
- x Workforce to work in services; jobs, restaurant, etc.
- x Cut tax dollars going to enhance developers' projects.

ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ISSUES

- x Do not build roadways through pristine areas. Where possible, expand existing right-of-ways. Where not possible to expand within such right-of-ways, use desirable land.
- x Pollution needs to be main concern.
- x Need to be controlled for new companies.
- x Regionally – We must clean up our air. The sickly and elderly are more and more vulnerable to disease. Our children will eventually have diseases only the elderly used to have. Build our roads now that can accommodate public transportation.
- x Air quality.
- x Functional utilization of open space.
- x Greater emphasis on open space and density transfers.
- x Years of planning and environmental studies cut deeply into funds available to construct streets, roads, and freeways.





ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES ISSUES (CONTINUED)

- x Quality of life is our biggest resource.
- x Maintain adequate open space around roadways.
- x Air quality – get serious about it.
- x Start real water conservation efforts; water supply planning.
- x Open space preservation.
- x Trolley cars in the middle of streets will increase air pollution by causing more traffic congestion and more highway miles driven and more starts and stops by cars that would have made a left turn. With trolleys, must make either three-point turns or one right and two left turns and go around the block.

LAND USE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- x Take a sensible look at the true results of development. Stop looking at only the money brought in and look at increased services and pollution.
- x Separate areas of high density and low density home construction.
- x Downtown/central city development at Surprise Center – live, work, and play.
- x Must not develop at low densities towards the center of town.
- x Infrastructure maintained to support growth.
- x Develop communities after transportation system is completed.
- x First – build a rapid transit line and you affect land use and make major effects in traffic flows.
- x Develop mass transportation/light rail for core.
- x Consider light rail to serve Northwest valley, including [missing text].



TRANSPORTATION AND TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- x Eliminate through truck traffic in downtown areas (Wickenburg example).
- x Big issue is truck traffic and designating limited truck routes (not letting trucks go where they want to go).
- x Job to housing balance to reduce community distances.
- x Make 303 a parkway, not freeway, without through truck traffic.
- x Need real objectives – convenient schedules by managers, faster door to door (i.e. shorter travel times), lower costs per unit of production, greater productivity of transit equipment, and safer.
- x Need real strategies.
- x Need real policies.
- x Need good fully allocated cost data per RPM.
- x Need good yield data per RPM data.
- x Fund and construct the CANAMEX highway through Maricopa County.
- x Rapid transit west to east – light rail, not just for large towns.
- x People [need] train travel.
- x Flexible transit patterns.
- x Removing trucks from residential/commercial areas of Maricopa County.
- x Build more roads and freeways.
- x Eliminate dead-end streets and routes.
- x We're still building 1960's ramps.
- x Demand cleaner fuel.
- x Establish truck routes.
- x Stop mindless freeways, [they become] real parking lots.



PART III. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

The following are additional issues that were identified by participants in an informal, roundtable discussion held during the Northwest Valley Focus Group.

- x Distribute federal funding regionally and fairly.
- x Cost figures need to be evaluated for each element.
- x Truck traffic through Wickenburg (NAFTA impact).
- x Sound alternation along freeways.
- x Growth projections are not represented on the roadway congestion boards.
- x Bell Road west of Grand Avenue should be red.
- x Put Loop 303 in 2025 and 2040 roadway congestion maps.
- x Bring South Mountain freeway around to connect with Loop 101.
- x Do not plan for another Los Angeles transportation mess.

PART IV. GOALS AS PRESENTED BY PARTICIPANTS

The following are goals that were developed by Northwest Valley Focus Group participants in an informal, roundtable discussion, regarding the future of transportation in the Valley.

- x Improve air quality:
 - _ Reduce truck traffic in residential areas;
 - _ Demand cleaner fuel;
 - _ Establish truck routes; and
 - _ Fund and construct CANAMEX.
- x Reduce reliance on automobiles and SOV (single occupant vehicles).
- x Build 4th runway at Sky Harbor [International Airport].
- x Provide financial incentives to support mass transit (mixed company).





PART IV. GOALS AS PRESENTED BY PARTICIPANTS (CONTINUED)

- x Provide passenger rail for long distance travel.
- x To develop a usable transportation system for the region.
- x Recognize and reinforce polycentric urban form.
- x Balance arterial network – more east and west in NW Valley.
- x Improve road/transportation system network efficiency.
- x Reduce workforce travel.
- x Protect Luke Air Force Base (AFB) from encroachment.
- x Build new regional airport.
- x Balance regional decision making to establish regional equity in resource allocation.
- x Balance residential and employment uses in planning.

